

BURNOUT AMONG UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: FROM SILENT EXHAUSTION TO THE CRISIS OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract. Academic burnout represents one of the most underestimated challenges of higher education systems in transition. This study investigates the prevalence, determinants, and consequences of professional burnout among university teaching staff in the Republic of Moldova, within a context marked by structural economic constraints, administrative overload, and insufficient institutional recognition. Although university professors appear to hold an "elitist" status, they are exposed to a toxic mix of administrative burden, modest salaries, research pressures, and adaptation to modern demands (digitalization, internationalization, student retention). This leads to chronic exhaustion that threatens the future of universities in the Republic of Moldova.

Keywords: academic burnout, Maslach Burnout Inventory, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization.

ARDEREA PROFESIONALĂ A PROFESORILOR UNIVERSITARI DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA: DE LA EPUIZARE SILENȚIOASĂ LA CRIZA SISTEMULUI DE ÎNVĂȚĂMÂNT SUPERIOR

Rezumat. Burnout-ul academic reprezintă una dintre cele mai subestimate provocări ale sistemelor de învățământ superior în tranziție. Studiul de față investighează prevalența, factorii determinanți și consecințele arderii profesionale în rândul cadrelor didactice universitare din Republica Moldova, într-un context marcat de constrângeri economice structurale, supraîncărcare administrativă și recunoaștere instituțională insuficientă. Deși profesorii universitari par a avea un statut „elitist”, ei sunt expuși la un mix toxic de suprasarcină administrativă, salarii modeste, presiuni de cercetare și adaptare la cerințele moderne (digitalizare, internaționalizare, retenție studenți), ceea ce duce la o epuizare cronică ce amenință viitorul universităților din Republica Moldova.

Cuvinte cheie: burnout academic, Maslach Burnout Inventory, epuizare emoțională, depersonalizare.

Introduction

The phenomenon of burnout in the university education system is not new, but has become particularly visible since 2015. The thesis of Veronica Gorincioi [1] remains a reference point, showing that over a third of respondents exhibited moderate or severe symptoms. Subsequent studies (including those concerning pre-university teaching staff) confirm the upward trend.

Thousands of university lecturers in the Republic of Moldova are living through a silent exhaustion - a phenomenon known as professional burnout syndrome. Defined through three classic dimensions - emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced

sense of personal accomplishment - burnout strongly affects "helping" and relational professions, and the university education system falls within this high-risk group.

The benchmark study conducted by Veronica Gorincioi in 2015 on 120 university professors showed that the syndrome is present at an alarming level, with significant differences related to gender, age, stress, and job satisfaction. Since then, pressures have intensified: pandemic, digital transition, internationalization requirements, declining student demographics, and salaries that, even after the 2025 increases, remain modest relative to the responsibilities and competencies required.

University professors appear, on the surface, to be a privileged category - academic titles, flexible schedules, social prestige. The reality is different: multiple teaching loads, suffocating bureaucracy, constant pressure to publish in indexed journals, adaptation to Generation Z students, and a continuous migration of the best academics to Romania, the EU, or the private sector. The result? A silent crisis that erodes not only individual health, but also the quality of the entire higher education system.

This article explores the deep causes of burnout in Moldovan universities, its consequences for the educational system, and - most importantly - the practical solutions needed at the personal, institutional, and governmental levels.

In 2025–2026, the situation has become more complicated. Recent salary increases (bonuses of up to 4,500 MDL for professors and habilitated doctors) represent progress, but incomes remain insufficient to ensure financial stability, especially in the context of living costs in Chişinău. Universities face a sharp decline in student numbers, fierce competition between institutions, and international accreditation pressures. Many professors accumulate teaching loads, research projects, administrative activities, and consulting work, easily reaching 50–60 working hours per week.

Compared to Romania or the Baltic countries, Moldova records a more pronounced brain drain, with young PhD graduates often preferring positions abroad or in the private sector.

Burnout does not announce itself with alarms. It sets in gradually, like erosion: first enthusiasm disappears, then comes the fatigue that does not yield to rest, and finally arrives the feeling that the work no longer has meaning. In the universities of the Republic of Moldova, this phenomenon has taken on, in recent years, the dimensions of a warning that the system cannot afford to ignore.

According to data collected in this study, nearly two out of three university lecturers interviewed describe a state of chronic overload. Yet the subject remains one of institutional silence - professor burnout is rarely officially recognized, and even more rarely addressed systemically.

„I started to dread Monday mornings. Not because of classes — I love classes. I dread the emails, the reports, the meetings that go nowhere. Somewhere along the way, I lost the reason I chose to work in a higher education institution in Moldova.”

-associate professor, 14 years of academic career (anonymous interview, 2024)

This study combines quantitative data (questionnaires administered at 3 higher education institutions in the Republic of Moldova, N=187) with a qualitative component - 6 semi-structured interviews with teaching staff with 5 to 27 years of experience. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) [2], adapted for the academic environment, was used to assess the level of professional burnout.

The questionnaire results are as follows (see Figure 1):

- 67% of respondents report moderate or severe emotional exhaustion;
- 54% signal depersonalization toward students and colleagues;
- 41% have seriously considered leaving the profession in the past 12 months;
- 28% feel institutionally supported in managing professional stress.

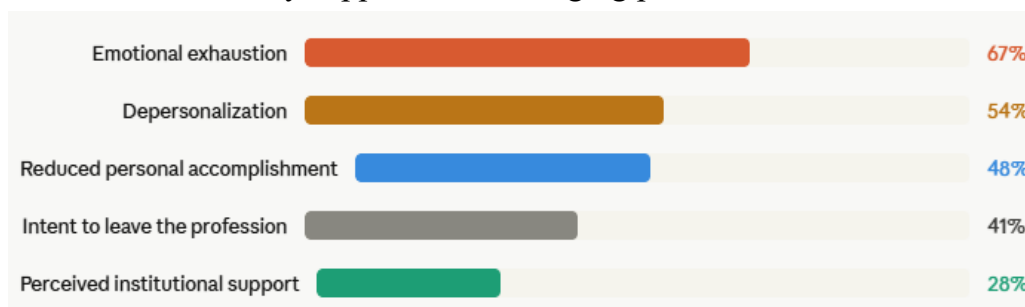


Figure 1. Measured burnout indicators

Academic burnout is not simply the result of "working too much". Recent research in organizational psychology [3, 4] shows that systemic factors - lack of autonomy, inadequacy of rewards, absence of equity, and organizational values perceived as discordant - contribute significantly more to burnout than workload itself.

The causes of burnout among teaching staff in the Republic of Moldova are shown in the Figure 2.

The semi-structured interviews, conducted over three months, followed three thematic axes: the subjective experience of stress, the coping strategies used, and the perception of the institution. The excerpts below are reproduced with the participants' consent and anonymized according to ethical protocols.

„Students give me energy. But when I leave the classroom, reality hits me - bills, installments, and a salary that doesn't cover even half of my family's needs. I have three jobs in parallel. I don't remember the last time I read something for pleasure.”

- university lecturer, 7 years of experience (anonymous interview, 2025)

„My colleagues are leaving. The best ones, those with doctorates from abroad. We remain - those who couldn't or didn't want to leave. And we take over their courses. And we stay silent."

- university professor, over 25 years of experience (anonymous interview, 2025)

„I realized I had burnout when I could no longer be present in class. I was there physically, but my mind was somewhere far away. I was exhausted. I spoke with the department head - he told me that everyone is tired."

- university assistant, medical faculty (anonymous interview, 2024)

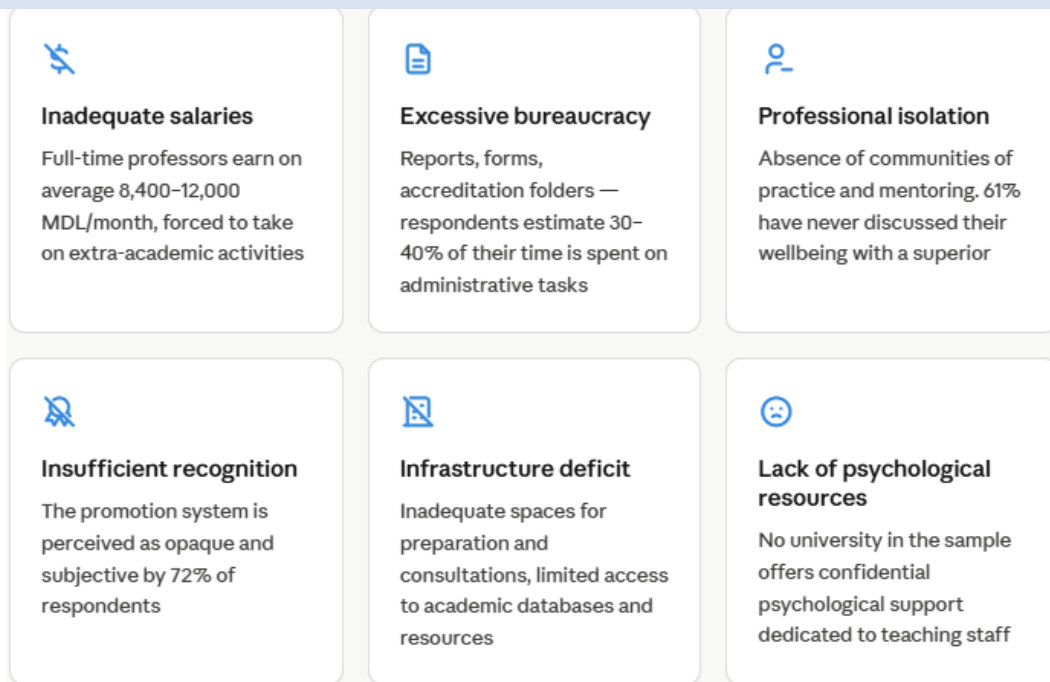


Figure 2. Causes of burnout in Moldovan universities

Self-assessment of risk level

The questionnaire below is a brief screening tool - not a clinical diagnosis. It is based on the MBI subscales and is intended for teaching staff who wish to assess their risk level.

Complete Guide to interpreting Burnout Self-Assessment Questionnaire scores for university teaching staff

5–8 Points - Professional balance. Manageable stress, personal resources intact

Your responses indicate a level of professional stress that remains within normal and manageable limits. Your emotional resources are relatively intact, commitment to the profession is present, and the capacity for recovery after difficult periods is functioning. This is the profile of a teacher who, for now, navigates the challenges of the system without being overwhelmed by them.

Burnout self-assessment questionnaire
Answer each question on a scale from 1 (never) to 5 (very often / very much)

1. At the end of the working day I feel emotionally exhausted, even if I have not made a special physical effort.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Very often

2. I wake up in the morning with no motivation for the working day ahead.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Very often

3. I feel that students or colleagues irritate me more easily than before, or that I am becoming indifferent toward them.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Very often

4. I have the impression that no matter how much I work, my professional achievements are barely recognized or are irrelevant.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Very much

5. I have seriously considered abandoning my academic career or emigrating for a similar position in another country.

1 2 3 4 5

Never Very seriously

Figure 3. Burnout self-assessment questionnaire

The diagnostic is illustrated in Figure 4.

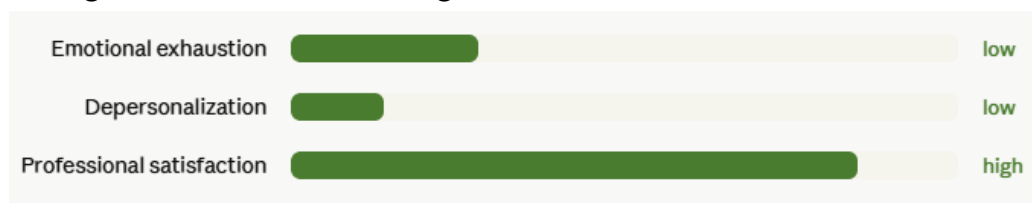


Figure 4. Scores for the Professional balance zone

Characteristic signs:

- ✓ Consistent motivation for teaching activity
- ✓ Ability to disconnect at the end of the day
- ✓ Positive relationships with students and colleagues
- ✓ Sufficient energy for research or personal activities

Recommendations:

- ✓ Maintain healthy routines - regular sleep, physical activity, and clear boundaries between work and personal life are the "vaccine" against burnout.
- ✓ Invest in collegial relationships - a quality professional community is the most powerful protective factor documented in the literature.
- ✓ Periodic monitoring - reassess your state each semester, especially during peak periods (exam sessions, accreditations, evaluations).

9–14 Points - Early chronic stress. Warning signs, partially eroded resources

Moderate attention recommended. Scores in this range correspond to the profile of 38% of university teaching staff in the study sample (Figure 5). Ignoring these signals frequently leads to escalation toward more severe levels within 1–2 years. This score means you are in a transitional zone: emotional resources are partially eroded, but not exhausted. The accumulated stress from administrative responsibilities, financial pressures, or lack of professional recognition is beginning to visibly affect the quality of the work experience. There are moments of satisfaction - especially in the classroom - but also periods when everything seems too much.

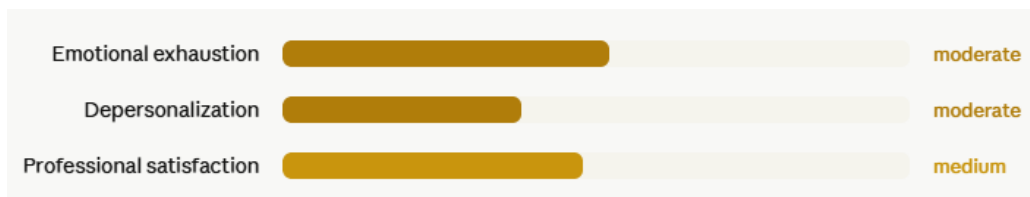


Figure 5. Scores for the Early chronic stress zone

Characteristic signs:

- ✓ Fatigue that does not fully disappear after the weekend
- ✓ Increased irritability toward administrative tasks
- ✓ Difficulty concentrating outside class hours
- ✓ Decreased enthusiasm for research activities
- ✓ Financial worries that interfere with work
- ✓ Occasional feeling that the effort invested is pointless

Recommendations:

- ✓ Verbalize what you feel - discuss the situation with a trusted colleague, a close friend, or a family member. Silence intensifies perceived stress.
- ✓ Identify 1–2 main sources of stress and explore what you can effectively control. Not all problems can be solved, but clear prioritization reduces the feeling of overwhelm.
- ✓ Set availability limits - for emails, messages, and requests outside working hours. Clear boundaries are an act of professional hygiene, not rudeness.
- ✓ Reintroduce a regenerative activity - pleasure reading, sport, a hobby. Proactive recovery is more effective than reactive recovery.

15–19 Points - Moderate burnout. Significant exhaustion, intervention recommended

Intervention recommended: This level of burnout affects the quality of teaching, interpersonal relationships, and physical health. Research shows that without intervention, 60% of individuals in this zone reach severe burnout within 6–18 months.

Moderate burnout means that exhaustion is no longer episodic - it has become the default state (Figure 6). You go to classes, fulfill tasks, but "autopilot" has taken over. Interactions with students may feel like an effort, and the feeling that your work does not

matter is constantly present. The body often sends signals (insomnia, headaches, digestive problems) that we ignore or attribute to other causes.

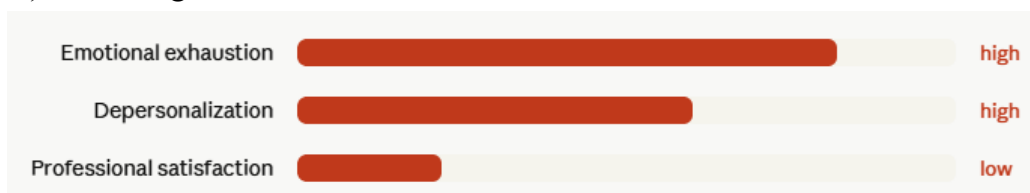


Figure 6. Scores for the Moderate burnout zone

Characteristic signs:

- ✓ Physical presence in class, but emotional absence
- ✓ Increased cynicism toward the institution and the system
- ✓ Sleep disorders (insomnia or hypersomnia)
- ✓ Frequent somatic symptoms (headache, muscular tension)
- ✓ Social withdrawal, avoidance of colleagues
- ✓ Persistent thoughts about abandoning a career

Recommendations:

- ✓ Consult a psychologist or psychotherapist - not as a last resort, but as a professional and constructive step. Cognitive-behavioral therapy has documented efficacy in reducing academic burnout.
- ✓ Medical consultation - physical symptoms associated with burnout require evaluation. Your family doctor can also provide guidance for short-term sick leave if necessary.
- ✓ Renegotiate tasks - if possible, discuss with the department head about the temporary redistribution of some responsibilities. It is legitimate to ask for help.
- ✓ Prioritize sleep and nutrition - an exhausted brain cannot regenerate without physiological foundations. These are not "luxuries", but basic conditions for recovery

20–25 Points — Severe burnout. Active crisis, urgent professional support needed

Urgent professional support recommended: Scores in this zone indicate an active burnout crisis (Figure 7). Recovery is possible and has good prognosis with adequate support - but requires prompt action, not avoidance or self-reliance.

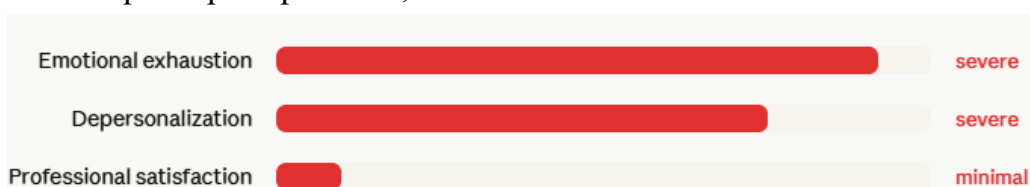


Figure 7. Scores for the Severe burnout zone

At this level, burnout can no longer be managed through minor adjustments. Emotional reserves are practically exhausted, and the capacity to find meaning or

satisfaction in work is severely compromised. Symptoms that overlap with depression or generalized anxiety may appear. This score does not mean you are "weak" or that you have failed - it means you have carried too heavy a burden, alone, for too long.

Characteristic signs:

- ✓ Inability to enjoy anything, including favorite activities
- ✓ The permanent feeling that "you can't go on"
- ✓ Marked social isolation, including from family
- ✓ Episodes of crying, extreme irritability, or emotional numbness
- ✓ Frequent and persistent physical health problems
- ✓ Recurring thoughts of total abandonment (career, relationships, country)

Recommendations:

- ✓ Urgently consult a mental health specialist - a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist. Severe burnout can evolve into clinical depression if untreated. This is not a weakness; it is a medical emergency.
- ✓ Consider sick leave - your body and mind need real recovery time. Continuing "at all costs" worsens the situation and increases the risk of long-term consequences.
- ✓ Temporarily give up non-essential tasks - identify which activities can be delegated, postponed, or refused without irreversible consequences.
- ✓ Tell someone - a trusted person, a friend, a partner. Isolation worsens severe burnout. You do not have to manage this situation alone.
- ✓ Recovery is real and possible - severe burnout, properly treated, has a good prognosis. Many professors have gone through this period and returned to a satisfying career. Step one is to ask for help.

The 3 clinical MBI dimensions are described below:

- ✓ Emotional exhaustion: Lack of psychological energy and the feeling of depleted emotional resources. The professor feels they have "nothing left to give" to students.
- ✓ Depersonalization: Development of a cynical, detached, or excessively cold attitude toward students and colleagues. It is an (inappropriate) defense mechanism through which the individual distances themselves from the source of stress.
- ✓ Personal accomplishment: The feeling of competence and success in professional activity. In burnout, this value drops dramatically, and the professor feels that their efforts no longer produce any relevant change in the system.

The consequences of burnout: A domino effect

Professional burnout does not remain confined to the person experiencing it. It spreads - from the individual to the institution, from the institution to the system - amplifying the existing vulnerabilities of a higher education system already under pressure

from insufficient resources and massive migration. The consequences of burnout at the 3 levels are listed below:

At the individual level

- Emotional exhaustion: Emotional reserves are progressively depleted. The capacity for empathy toward students decreases, and human interactions become a conscious effort rather than a natural exchange.
- Depersonalization and cynicism: The professor enters "defensive mode": students become an anonymous mass, not individuals. Cynicism toward the institution and toward the value of education grows gradually.
- Reduced personal accomplishment: The feeling that the work done has no real impact. Research [3] shows that this dimension is the most difficult to recover once it sets in.
- Health problems: Chronic insomnia (reported by 58% of the sample), generalized anxiety, subclinical or clinical depression, persistent somatic symptoms — headache, muscular tension, digestive disorders.

"I realized something had changed when I looked at a student crying during a consultation and felt nothing. Nothing. I simply waited for her to finish."

- associate professor, 18 years of career (anonymous interview, 2024)

At the institutional level

- Declining quality of teaching: Exhausted professors teach on "autopilot". Courses become repetitive, formative feedback disappears, and pedagogical innovation is the first casualty.
- Increased absenteeism: Frequent sick leaves, delays, unofficially delegated classes — behaviors that disrupt teaching continuity and increase pressure on remaining colleagues.
- Staff turnover: The most competent — those with doctorates, publications, international networks — are the first to leave. The system loses exactly the resources it needs most.
- Demotivation of doctoral students: Young researchers observe the state of their mentors and draw conclusions. The role model of the "exhausted university professor" discourages internal academic careers.

At the system level

- Systemic quality degradation: Moldovan universities risk losing international accreditations and Erasmus+ partnerships if quality indicators continue to decline due to teaching staff exhaustion.

- Competence exodus: The Republic of Moldova loses annually qualified teaching staff to Romania, Germany, and France. Burnout is a catalyst of this exodus, not merely a consequence.
- Unequal regional competition: Universities in Romania, Poland, or Estonia systematically invest in teacher wellbeing. The attractiveness gap relative to Moldova deepens year by year.
- Impact on the next generation: Students trained by exhausted professors absorb not only knowledge, but also models of professional behavior. Dysfunctional organizational culture reproduces generationally.

„If we lose another ten years without seriously addressing the wellbeing of teaching staff, we will be left with paper institutions - buildings, diplomas, stamps - without real academic substance.”

- Expert in educational policies, Chişinău (anonymous interview, 2025)

Protective factors that can keep professors in the system

Not all professors exposed to the same conditions develop burnout. Research in the psychology of resilience and occupational health identifies a clear set of factors that buffer the impact of chronic stress - factors that can be cultivated both individually and institutionally.

- Quality social support: Authentic collegial relationships are the strongest predictor of resilience to burnout. Professors who have at least one colleague with whom they can speak openly report significantly lower levels of exhaustion. Documented protective effect: 34% reduction in the risk of severe burnout [4].
- Autonomy in teaching: The freedom to structure courses, choose pedagogical methods, and manage academic time is a strong factor of professional satisfaction and resilience. Strong negative correlation with depersonalization ($r = -0.52$).
- Meaning of work: Professors who have a clear "why" - vocation, social impact, contribution to knowledge - resist systemic pressures better. Meaning functions as a cognitive buffer against daily frustrations. Predictive factor no. 1 for intention to remain in the system.
- Active recovery: Psychological detachment from work outside working hours - through sport, hobbies, family - allows for the regeneration of emotional resources. Lack of recovery dramatically accelerates burnout. Insufficient sleep triples the risk of severe exhaustion.
- Competence and growth: The feeling of professional development - through research, mobility, continuous training - counteracts the stagnation that fuels burnout. Investing in one's own competence is protective. Erasmus+ mobility associated with 28% reduction in exhaustion.

- Healthy organizational climate: The perception of equity, transparency, and coherent values at the institutional level significantly reduces all three dimensions of burnout. The department head plays a key role. Significant relationship with all MBI indicators ($p < 0.001$).

Existing initiatives in the Republic of Moldova:

- CNPAC (National Centre for Prevention of Child Abuse) pilot programs: Stress management and resilience training adapted for education professionals, with coverage in several institutions in Chişinău. Although initially oriented toward child protection, the mental health components are directly applicable to teaching staff.
- Salary supplement increases (MECC, 2023–2024): Recent government efforts to increase bonuses for academic-scientific titles represent a positive signal, although insufficient to eliminate the gap relative to the private or regional labor market.
- Institutional training at individual universities: Several universities (including USM and USMF) have conducted resilience and stress management training sessions for teaching staff, within international Erasmus+ projects or with NGO funding.
- Informal support networks: Online communities and WhatsApp groups of teaching staff have proven to be real sources of emotional and informational support. Institutionalizing such networks would amplify their impact.

Practical solutions and recommendations

Solutions to academic burnout are stratified - no single intervention can solve a systemic problem. Maximum efficiency is achieved through simultaneous actions at all three levels: personal, institutional, and governmental.

At the institutional level:

- ✓ Institutional wellbeing programs (**Urgent Priority**). Implementation of a confidential psychological counseling service dedicated exclusively to teaching staff - separate from the service offered to students. A minimum of 6 individual sessions per year, with an accredited psychologist. Model: University of Edinburgh Wellbeing Service, adapted to the Moldovan context.
- ✓ Reducing academic bureaucracy (**Urgent Priority**). Audit of all mandatory reports, forms, and documents. Elimination of duplicates, digitalization of administrative processes, reduction of documentation volume per teaching staff member by at least 30%. Realistic target within 12 months with internal political will.
- ✓ Equitable distribution of tasks (**Medium Term**). Transparency of the teaching load and administrative distribution. Introduction of a clear cap on remunerated overtime hours. Accountability of department heads for workload balance within the team.
- ✓ Communities of practice and mentoring (**Medium Term**). Creation of structured peer-support groups, facilitated by a trained moderator. Monthly professional

reflection sessions, exchange of pedagogical best practices, collective debriefing after peak periods.

- ✓ Periodic monitoring of organizational climate (**Long Term**). Anonymous semi-annual questionnaire evaluating professional wellbeing, with public results and a mandatory action plan. Wellbeing indicators included in institutional accreditation reports.

At the governmental level:

- ✓ Retention policies through competitive salaries (**Urgent Priority**). Recommended target: the salary of a full-time university lecturer should represent at least 150% of the average economy salary (compared to ~80% at present). Performance- and publication-differentiated pay scale — not only by title and seniority.
- ✓ National scholarships for research and mobility (**Urgent Priority**). Expansion of the national scholarship program for 1–3 month research stays at partner institutions in the EU. Academic mobility is documented as a protective factor against burnout and a vector for renewing professional motivation.
- ✓ Service housing fund for young teaching staff (**Medium Term**). The model used in France and adapted in Poland: social apartments at subsidized rents for assistants and lecturers in the first 5 years of their career, in university cities. Reduces financial pressure, the primary factor in early burnout.
- ✓ Reform of the promotion and evaluation system (**Medium Term**). Transparent, public, and stable promotion criteria. Evaluation committees with members external to the institution. Inclusion of wellbeing and collegiality evaluations in the competency profile of department heads and deans.
- ✓ National mental health program for educators (**Long Term**). Inclusion of teaching staff in the Ministry of Health's programs for the prevention of professional burnout (alongside doctors and social workers). Free access to a minimum of 10 psychotherapy sessions per year through CNAM.

At the personal level:

- ✓ Boundary-setting: separating work from personal life. Defining fixed availability hours for students and colleagues. Turning off email notifications after 7:00 PM. Explicit communication of limits - a competency that can be learned and practiced, not a personality trait.
- ✓ Evidence-based stress management techniques: Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) - an 8-week program with documented efficacy in reducing exhaustion in teaching staff (average reduction of 40% in MBI scores). Available online and through apps (Headspace, Calm, Insight Timer).
- ✓ Active physical recovery: Moderate physical activity of at least 150 minutes/week (WHO recommendation) is associated with a significant reduction in emotional

exhaustion symptoms. Does not require a gym -walking 30 minutes/day is effective and accessible.

- ✓ Cultivating social support networks: Conscious investment in quality collegial relationships - not instrumental networking, but authentic connections. Participation in professional communities online and offline (disciplinary associations, informal research groups).
- ✓ Continuing training in resilience and self-compassion: Courses in cognitive resilience and self-compassion (Self-Compassion, Kristin Neff) have shown significant results in reducing burnout in professors. Available for free through Coursera and edX, with recognized certificates.

International case studies adaptable to the Republic of Moldova

- *Finland* – Pedagogical Autonomy: Finnish professors have full control over curriculum and methodology. Evaluative bureaucracy is minimal – no external inspections and no weekly reports. *Adaptable in Moldova*: reducing administrative oversight at the department level.
- *Estonia* – Administrative Digitalization: The e-kool platform and integrated systems have reduced the volume of administrative documentation in Estonian universities by 60% within 5 years. *Adaptable in Moldova*: digitalization with EU support through Erasmus+ funds.
- *Norway* – Guaranteed Psychological Support: All Norwegian universities have a legal obligation to provide mental health services for staff, included in the collective employment contract. *Adaptable in Moldova*: clauses in collective agreements through trade union partnerships.
- *Georgia* – Gradual Salary Reform: Tripling of university salaries over 8 years, correlated with accreditation reform, dramatically reduced the academic exodus and increased the quality of local research. *Most relevant model for Moldova* – similar post-Soviet context.
- *Portugal* – Formalized Communities of Practice: Inter-university support networks for teaching staff, co-funded by the state and EU, reduced the intention to leave the profession by 29% in 3 years. *Adaptable in Moldova*: creation of regional networks.

Conclusions

The professional burnout of university teaching staff in the Republic of Moldova is not a marginal phenomenon - it is a structural crisis in progress. The data from this study show that the majority of professors work at or beyond the limits of emotional sustainability, without adequate institutional support, without recognition proportional to the effort invested, and often without hope that things will change.

And yet, at the end of every interview, we heard the same thing: "*I still love teaching.*" This is the most precious resource the system has - and the one it squanders silently, year after year.

A healthy educational system cannot be built on exhausted professors. Investment in the wellbeing of university teaching staff is not an expense, but the most profitable investment in the country's human capital and the foundation upon which the quality of tomorrow's education is built. A motivated and healthy professor trains competent students, generates quality research, and contributes to the economic and social development of the Republic of Moldova.

If we ignore the alarm signals of burnout, we risk a university system emptied of energy and talent. If we act now, we can transform the higher education system of the Republic of Moldova into an attractive, resilient, and high-performing environment.

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